



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

1090 VERMONT AVE., N.W., SUITE 510, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005 • 800-962-9008 • 202-414-0140 • FAX 202-544-3525

July 23, 2001

The Honorable Dennis Hastert
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Hastert:

As President of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) I write to express our support for the revised Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001 (H.R. 2563) introduced by Reps. Ganske, Dingell, Norwood and Berry. The AOA, which represents the nation's 47,000 osteopathic physicians, strongly supports this legislation and the changes incorporated by the sponsors.

This legislation reflects the compromises agreed upon during the Senate debate in June of this year. In our opinion, it addresses the concerns raised in the past about patient protection legislation.

H.R. 2563 includes the following compromises:

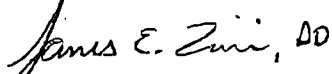
- Protects employers from liability when they appoint another entity to manage their health care decisions. Also excludes employers who self-insure and self-administer their own group health plans from liability for benefits determinations.
- Prevents external reviewers from requiring plans to cover items or services that are expressly excluded from the plan contract.
- Respects and protects state patients' right laws that provide the same or similar protections as those in the bill.
- Requires patients to exhaust all administrative remedies before they can go to state or federal court, while preserving access to immediate injunctive relief.
- Ensures that parallel causes of action could not be brought in both state and federal court.
- Ensures that treating physicians, hospitals and other treating health care providers will not be exposed to any liability in federal court.

Additionally, the bill includes provisions to improve access to health care including the expansion of Medical Savings Accounts (MSA's).

We understand that there are competing bills and are appreciative of the efforts made by several Members of Congress to advance this debate. However, due to the simple fact that this bill was approved recently by the United States Senate and that similar legislation was approved by the House in 1999, we feel that H.R. 2563 greatly reflects the position of the majority of the American public and of Congress.

As the House prepares to debate patient protection legislation, the AOA requests that you provide the Members of the House of Representatives a fair opportunity to vote on H.R. 2563. Thank you for your leadership on this issue and for your attention to our request. Please contact Shawn Martin, AOA Assistant Director of Government Relations at (202) 414-0147 for additional information.

Sincerely,



James E. Zini, D.O.
President

C: House Republican Leadership
House Democratic Leadership
The Honorable Greg Ganske
The Honorable John Dingell
The Honorable Charlie Norwood
The Honorable Marion Berry
AOA President-Elect
AOA Board of Trustees
AOA Council on Federal Health Programs
AOA Executive Director
AOA Senior Staff
AOA Department of Government Relations